

P 091025Z SEP 97  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0636  
INFO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY  
COMSEVENTHFLT  
CINCPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI//N2/N3//  
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J2/J233//  
JICPAC HONOLULU HI//IA4/IT3/0IX/OSS//  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
CDRUSARPAC FT SHAFTER HI//APOP-IM//  
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMCONSUL KARACHI  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMCONSUL CHENNAI  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY DHAKA  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
DIA WASHINGTON DC  
AMEMBASSY BEIJING  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 003477

DEPT FOR SA/INS  
KATHMANDU PLEASE PASS A/S INDERFURTH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/10/07  
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [EWWT](#) [CE](#)  
SUBJECT: LTTE ATTACKS SHIP CHARTERED BY US  
COMPANY

REP: COLOMBO 2714

11. (U) CLASSIFIED BY: MICHAEL OWEN, ECONOMIC  
COUNSELOR. REASON 1.5 (D)

12. (C) INITIAL REPORTS INDICATE THAT AT  
APPROXIMATELY 0100 LOCAL TIME SEPTEMBER 9, THE  
LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM (LTTE)  
ATTACKED THE MERCHANT VESSEL "CORDIALITY"  
WHICH WAS ANCHORED OFF THE NORTHEAST COAST OF  
SRI LANKA NEAR THE TOWN OF PULMODDAI,  
APPROXIMATELY 30 MILES NORTH OF TRINCOMALEE.  
UP TO 20 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN REPORTED KILLED,  
WOUNDED OR MISSING IN THE ATTACK, INCLUDING  
LOCAL WORKERS, FOREIGN CREWMEN (POSSIBLY  
CHINESE), AND ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL GUARDING  
THE SHIP. THERE WERE NO REPORTS OF AMCITS ON  
BOARD. BY LATE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 9, THE  
SHIP'S ENGINE ROOM WAS REPORTEDLY ON FIRE AND  
THE SHIP IN DANGER OF SINKING. SRI LANKAN  
NAVY PERSONNEL WERE ATTEMPTING TO EXTINGUISH  
THE FIRE.

13. (C) THE M/V CORDIALITY IS REPORTEDLY  
OWNED BY THE CHINA OCEAN SHIPPING COMPANY, A  
CHINESE STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISE; IT WAS  
REGISTERED IN PANAMA AND FLYING A PANAMANIAN  
FLAG. THE SHIP WAS UNDER CHARTER BY THE U.S.  
COMPANY "ACI CHEMICALS, INC." OF GREAT NECK,  
NEW YORK, TO TRANSPORT 30,000 TONS OF  
ILMENITE, A MINERAL SAND, FROM SRI LANKA TO  
ROTTERDAM AND THEN, POSSIBLY, TO THE UNITED  
STATES.

14. (C) COMMENT: THIS IS THE THIRD INCIDENT  
INVOLVING CIVILIAN SHIPPING SINCE JULY 1 (SEE  
REFTEL), BUT THE FIRST OCCASION WHEN A SHIP  
SAILING UNDER U.S. CHARTER HAS BEEN ATTACKED.  
IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE LTTE WOULD HAVE BEEN  
AWARE THAT THERE WERE U.S. INTERESTS AT STAKE  
WHEN ITS CADRES ATTACKED THE "CORDIALITY".  
HOWEVER, IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT  
THE LTTE IS WILLING TO ATTACK FOREIGN

INTERESTS IN ITS EFFORTS TO INTERDICT SHIPPING  
TO THE NORTH. END COMMENT.

SMYTH